

Intersection (WT)

Artist Commission Opportunity - Call for proposals

Deadline: 12 Noon (UK time) Monday 27 February 2017

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1. Introduction

Intersection is a commission opportunity created by **Fabrica**, centre for contemporary art in Brighton & Hove, and **Project Art Works**, Hastings, the UK's leading visual artist-led organisations working with people who have complex needs *and* the people, systems and services that support them¹.

We wish to co-commission an artwork for Fabrica's space that will resonate with neurodiverse audiences. We anticipate this will be an immersive, sensually stimulating art installation that will invite audiences to interact with it and each other, non-verbally.

Through this commission we wish to consider two questions or themes:

1. How architecture or constructed environments affect behaviour.
2. The nature of consciousness and communication: *How the world might appear to someone who is unable to cognitively assimilate knowledge? How communication occurs between people who do, and who do not use spoken language? And in what ways that connection can occur?*

The work will be presented as an exhibition, at Fabrica during July and August 2017. The exhibition will be accompanied by a programme of debates, events and hands-on activities that will be suitable for people with very different mental capacities.

We believe this commission to be an innovative and challenging proposition – for the selected artist, for us as the co-commissioners and for the audiences who will encounter it. We wish to commission one artist (or a pre-existing artist group), with a strong track record. We are inviting artists to apply who are living and working in the UK, EU and/or Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Turkey, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

¹ The term 'complex needs' embraces a number of impairments such as severe learning disability and/or autism and/or communication impairments and/or behaviours described as challenging that combine to produce multiple and intersecting support needs. People with intellectual disability and behaviours that challenge are some of the most excluded in society. This is because they are very often dependent on carers and agencies for access to the wider world and experiences such as art and culture.

Artist Commission Fee to develop the concept, make and install the work (includes research and development period to work with people with complex needs supported and facilitated by Project Art Works): £3,500

Production Budgets: Artist materials £2000; Budget for other fees and materials for installing the work: up to £15,000

Travel and Accommodation Expenses: TBC

We are now seeking proposals for this commission. To apply, please follow the application process detailed at the end of this document.

2. Other resources and context:

Co-production: As part of the commissioning process we are providing the selected artist with a period of research and development (up to 8 days in April & May 2017) including direct interaction with people with complex needs, through a series of workshops at Project Art Works. People with complex needs will be a key part of shaping the commission and be a target audience for the exhibition itself.

3. The commissioners

3.1 About Fabrica

Fabrica is Brighton & Hove's centre for contemporary art. Now in our twentieth year at the former Holy Trinity Church, we have accrued an outstanding track record in commissioning artists to create new, often extraordinary works for Fabrica's unique space and audiences.

Fabrica began as an artist initiative and is as committed now as it was two decades ago to giving artistic talent the space to dream, grow and crystallize. We produce three major, large-scale, visual art installations specific to our building each year, plus artist residencies and smaller scale commissions, and periodically, outdoor works. For each commission we have encouraged artists to be ambitious artistically and technically, by supporting them to work at a scale, within a context and/or with a level of complexity that is new to them. In an average year we attract 50,000 visitors to our gallery programme.

As a registered charity with an educational mission we are committed to generating interest and excitement about art and creativity, through and around learning. Believing that artists have much to teach us, we encourage an open dialogue between artists and visitors online and in the gallery space, through an integrated programme of activities that strives to remove barriers to access, engagement and understanding.

Dedicated programmes of our work seek to engage older people, those with disabilities and teenagers who might not readily visit an art gallery or museum. Maintaining this core value underpins our capacity to attract, retain and develop a team of 120 volunteers who are passionate about communicating what Fabrica has to offer - in the gallery, online and to the wider community.

Alongside our main exhibition programme we provide the Artist Resource: a library and programme of events supporting artists' professional development. Activities include: 1-2-1 sessions with experienced artists on developing work and receiving feedback, peer review group meetings, artist and curator talks and an increasingly important aspect of our programme: Making Space, which supports locally-based artists to use Fabrica's exhibition space for 3-4 days as a temporary studio, a place to document work or a place to try out new work on a larger scale.

Project Art Works are artist-led and create programmes of innovative collaborations that promote deep and authentic relationships between arts organisations, social care professionals and people who have intellectual impairment.

Since 2010 they have worked in partnership with regional and national arts organisations delivering awareness raising and mentoring, and creating exhibitions, to diversify and increase the relevance and reach of cultural programming. These collaborations have promoted new practical and philosophical approaches to the meaningful involvement of people who have complex needs in visual art activity that finds its way into mainstream programming and is of exceptional quality in its concept, aesthetic and production. As part of each collaboration they facilitate creative encounters between staff teams of galleries and people who have complex needs, social care workers, families and circles of support.

Art that references the experience of people who have different ways of being in and interacting with the world is rarely exhibited or featured in the curatorial programmes of galleries or museums. Through, in some cases, long-term collaborations the Project Art Works artists share knowledge and learn more through inclusive art and actions that aim to increase awareness and effect change. The programme creates explosive and challenging projects that radically change the perception of socially inclusive art and increase understanding of how to reach and involve people with profound disability in art of the highest quality. **28,000 people** visited *In the Realm of Others*, an exhibition that came out of a two-year collaboration between Project Art Works and the De La Warr Pavilion (Bexhill, UK) in 2015–16.

3.2 Our approach to the commission

Project Art Works and Fabrica's partnership is central to the commission. We have a shared objective for the project concerning the meaningful involvement of severely intellectually disabled people and of bringing their experience to a much wider group of people.

Project Art Works' ethos and process of working with people with complex needs, is one of collaboration: encouraging open investigations in colour, light, paint, images and physical material. These explorations are supported by artist-facilitators through non-directive approaches that establish trust and encourage freedom for all those involved. The importance of setting the scene for these encounters, creating the environment for participant-led creativity is also key to PAW's ethos and practice.

Fabrica's programme explores human themes and artists are commissioned to work with the space site-specifically. Many of Fabrica's exhibitions are immersive, physically interactive, sensually stimulating and/or atmospheric, playing off the architectural space in which they are located.

In different ways we each understand how space (how it is organised and mediated) affects mood and behaviour. We know how to connect with different audiences intellectually, non-verbally and creatively – through art works, discussion and creative activity in ways that are meaningful for the different individuals.

4. Participation and audiences

The period before, during and after the exhibition will be used to cultivate partnerships with people with complex needs, their families and schools, care professionals, advocacy organisations, and Care Commissioners. This will enable Fabrica and Project Art Works to develop a relevant and lively programme of activities, debates and events suitable for people with very different intellectual capacities. The co-commission presents a unique opportunity to:

- Develop collaborative methodologies that support the involvement of people with severe intellectual disability in Fabrica and its programming.

- Enable severely intellectually disabled people and their wider communities of support to experience the value and relevance of contemporary art and culture to their lives. And for these people to be valued by the cultural sector.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement of the social care sector with visual art practice and galleries.

5. Timeline and process

Deadline for expressions of interest: **12 Noon (UK time) Monday 27 February 2017**

The selection process and interview panel will include representatives from: Fabrica, Project Art Works, people with complex needs and specialist support workers, a representative of Artsworld South East Bridge.

Notification of shortlisted artists: **Friday 3 March 2017**. Shortlisted artists may be invited to submit further material prior to this date.

Interviews will be in person in Brighton & Hove, on **Thursday 9 March 2017**. Artist travel and accommodation expenses to attend the interview will be provided.

Notification of the selected artist/artist group: **Monday 13 March 2017**

Artist research and production period: April-June 2017. We would be looking for the artist to begin work on the commission immediately after 13 March 2017.

Location, resources and management of the commission: The artist will be expected to meet (in person and/or via Skype) with Liz Whitehead and Kate Adams and other members of the Fabrica and Project Art Works teams to discuss the progression of the work, the development of the exhibition as a whole including exhibition events and the exhibition marketing. The artist will be expected to be available to meet from 13 March 2017.

6. Making an application

6.1 Who can apply

We welcome applications from artists who are living and working in the UK, other parts of the EU, and/or Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Turkey, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine.

6.2 Criteria

We are seeking to commission artists who have been making work professionally for no less than 5+ years and who have a track record of producing high quality work.

The commission will be awarded to an artist/artist group who can demonstrate a genuine interest in the commission:

- Proposals should make a clear point of connection with the concepts laid out in sections 1-4 of this document.
- We want to see proposals that are critically engaged with ideas, emotion, learning and aesthetics.

- Proposals that are technically ambitious, would need to demonstrate that the artist has the required knowledge and skill to complete the commission, and/or how they would bring in the necessary expertise to achieve the commission within the given budget.

We are inviting artists to apply whose practice incorporates sculpture and/or installation and/or sound and/or moving image and participatory and socially responsible practice

We are particularly interested in artists who have a track record in interactivity and audience participation but are not necessarily looking for artists who have previously worked with people with complex needs. We particularly welcome proposals that are experimental and informed by current technological and innovation.

We will favour proposals that show a clear understanding of audiences. Artists should consider how audiences can readily gain access to and engage with their ideas. Applicants should demonstrate how they collaborate and work with audiences across their practice.

6.3 How to Apply

Your proposal should include all of the following:

Your full name

Contact Details

- Your full address
- Your phone number
- Your email address
- Your Skype address
- Your URL (if applicable)

Your statement. Please write a short statement which:

- introduces yourself and your artistic practice
- outlines your idea for the commission and how you would approach and make it
- details the specialist expertise needed to deliver the commission, whether that is something you possess or have access to, and if not how you will access this expertise within the stated available budget.

In all your submission should be no longer than 1000 words in total. It should be saved as a WORD document or a PDF document.

Your application should be emailed to: office@fabrica.org.uk. To be eligible for consideration it must include:

- The words 'Intersection Commission' in the subject bar
- your statement - as a WORD document or a PDF document
- a two-page CV - as a WORD document or a PDF document
- a link to a website, or downloadable file, which contains documentation of your previous work.

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